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ABSTRACT

This paper is a summary report of the "Study of the Emergency School Aid Act Magnet School Program" which was undertaken to determine the effectiveness of magnet school programs as a strategy in school desegregation. The representative sample of eighteen schools used in the study and their community contexts are described, and the relationship of magnet schools to effectiveness in school district desegregation is analyzed. Taken into consideration are those characteristics of magnet schools which correlated with desegregation effectiveness. Additional correlates identified include those which helped magnet schools meet enrollment and racial composition goals. Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) awards criteria and awards processes are examined in relation to magnet school effectiveness. ESAA funded and non-ESAA funded programs are discussed and their effects on magnet schools are compared. Recommendations are outlined for making the role of magnet schools and the Magnet School Program more effective in school integration. (Author/EB)

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Magnet Schools and Desegregation:

Study of the Emergency School Aid Act Magnet School Program

SUMMARY REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Study of the Emergency School Aid Act Magnet School Program

Summary Report

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Opposition of the American public to what is popularly termed "forced busing," combined with declining white enrollments in many urban school districts, has prompted local school administators, the federal government, and the courts to search for new approaches to school desegregation. The more popular approaches have been based on the concept of "attracting" students rather than "forcing" them to attend desegregating schools. The "magnet school," which is defined by the Office of Education as "a school or education center that offers a special curriculum capable of attracting substantial numbers of students of different racial backgrounds" (20 U.S.C. 1619 (9)) is one method of implementing this idea of attracting rather than forcing students. In 1976, an amendment to the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) provided funds for the development of magnet school programs to assist voluntary desegregation of school districts. However, since little was actually known about the effectiveness of magnet school programs as a strategy in school desegregation, the Office of Education contracted with Abt Associates Inc. to perform a study of magnet schools. The results of the Abt Associates study are presented in this summary report.*

1.1 Background

Support for the magnet school concept as a desegregation technique has grown despite the lack of information regarding its effectiveness in desegregation and its impact on communities. Proponents claim that magnet schools will signficantly reduce overall hostility to desegregation by providing quality education in an integrated setting. They claim that, rather than viewing school desegregation as a threat, white parents will consider the course offerings of the magnet school as an opportunity for their children to obtain quality education. Even though the distance magnet school students are bused may be great (since students may come from all areas of the city), the element of choice would defuse opposition to busing. If this reduces white flight, more integration may be achieved in the long run than under a mandatory plan.

Opponents of the use of magnet school programs for the purpose of desegregation argue that such programs are adopted by school districts in order to avoid desegregation. They fear that school districts will employ magnet programs as substitutes for a comprehensive mandatory desegregation program. Opponents also express concern because of fears that magnet schools may become "refuges" for middle class children--the result of "skimming" from both the majority and minority community. Critics also point out that the implementation of a magnet school program may cause the non-magnet schools to be perceived as "second class," since magnet schools are publicized as being special and of superior quality.

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*The study, which started in September 1977, was not designed to investigate the ESAA Magnet School Program alone--the first awards were just being made at that time--but to also provide information on magnet schools generally and on their employment by various school districts to further efforts at desegregation.

1.2 Purposes of the Report

In September, 1977, the United States Office of Education, HEW, contracted with Abt Associates Inc. to conduct a study of the ESAA Magnet School Program. The study had as its major objectives:

1. To describe ESAA magnet schools, and other comparison magnet schools, including characteristics of the school districts;
2. To assess the overall effectiveness of the magnet school as a desegregation device;
3. To assess the conditions for a successful magnet school program; and
4. To examine the operations of the ESAA Magnet School Program.

A total of 18 school districts containing magnet schools were selected as the study sample. Abt Associates personnel visited each site, collecting documentary evidence and conducting interviews with school district administrators, teachers and principals, parents, and representatives of community groups involved in the school desegregation process. At each site, team members visited at least three magnet schools and obtained information on the school program, the history of the development of the program, and other pertinent information. From these case studies and the collected documentation came the information used to assess the study objectives.

1.3 Summary of the Report

Major Desegregation Findings

Magnet School as a Desegregation Device

Only a limited amount of desegregation can be attributed to magnet schools. However, magnet schools can be an effective desegregation device when used as a component of a comprehensive, district-wide desegregation effort and when used in districts with fewer difficulties for desegregation, such as those with a smaller proportion of minority students

- Districts within which magnets were most successful for desegregation:

  --had either voluntary or strong court-ordered plans;
  --used magnets as only one component of a more comprehensive desegregation plan;
  --had a history of relatively smooth desegregation;
  --had a smaller percentage of minority students in the district than those less successfully desegregating.

- Magnet schools are not effective as the primary or solitary means of desegregation.

- As part of a comprehensive desegregation plan, magnet schools can assist in increasing district-wide desegregation, although indications are that most of the increase may be due to the effect of other techniques.

- Magnet school programs have a beneficial effect upon attitudes toward desegregation.
- Magnet schools do not resegregate other schools in the district.

Conditions for a Successful Magnet School

Most magnet schools are able to achieve their racial composition and enrollment goals. The most important conditions for a successful magnet school are type of program (curriculum), the school attendance zone served, and the location of the magnet school in terms of the racial composition of the neighborhood.

- Most magnet schools are able to meet their racial composition goals, although some schools achieve their goals at the expense of underenrollment of the projected school population.
- The most important conditions for a successfully desegregating magnet school are type of program, school attendance zone served, and location.
- The more successful schools, particularly elementary schools, have an attendance zone which is more limited. This reflects the continued importance of the neighborhood school.
- Mixed racial neighborhoods are the most acceptable locations for magnet schools on both the elementary and secondary school levels.

Findings on Magnet School Characteristics

- Magnet schools do provide for an increased chance for the parents to have some control over their child's schooling in a desegregating situation.
- Magnet schools are used for a variety of desegregation purposes, including the desegregation of particular geographic areas as well as for district-wide desegregation.
- The image of "excellence" determined magnetism more than the school's uniqueness.
- Some minority communities, although pleased with the improved education brought by magnet schools, were resentful because not all of the children in the neighborhood could attend them.
- There was some evidence of "skimming," and of magnet schools becoming "havens" for majority and middle-class students. But there was also evidence of "reverse skimming," where parents were using magnet schools as a means to give their children with learning or behavioral difficulties a "last chance."

Findings for the ESAA Magnet School Program

> The ESAA magnet school program funded many school districts with marginal needs for desegregation assistance, thus failing to adequately represent the goals and priorities of the program. This is due in part to the small number of applications which could be funded under the basic priorities established by the program. Few differences were found between the ESAA funded and non-ESAA funded programs.

- The objectives of the ESAA Magnet School Program are vague and diffuse; as such, they technically allow the funding of magnet school programs for a wider variety of reasons than the expressed purpose of district-wide desegregation.
- There are two criteria for awards of ESAA Magnet Grants: (1) statistical reduction of racial isolation; (2) quality of the proposal. The second frequently overwhelms the first.
- Of the 12 ESAA Grants awarded to districts, a number showed in their proposals no improvement in desegregation during the project year or were increasing minority group isolation in the project year. Awards were made, also, to districts in which there was very little minority group isolation.
- ESAA funded magnet schools more often met their racial compositon goals, but the ESAA goals are more lenient (e.g., 20-50 percent minority) than those for non-ESAA districts (district average minority enrollment $\pm$5 percent).

2.0 MAGNET SCHOOLS AND THEIR CONTEXTS

The magnet schools in our study and the districts within which they are located represent a diversity of types and conditions. This section provides a general description of magnet school structures and the conditions in which they are established.

2.1 District Characteristics

Eleven of the 18 districts in this study are under court order to desegregate. Of the remaining seven districts, four are desegregating voluntarily; two are desegregating under formal pressure from their respective State Boards of Education; and one district is the object of HEW administrative action.

The source of most (12) districts' desegregation plans exercises a moderate degree of control over the specifications and monitoring of the plans' implementation. All but one of the court ordered plans, exercise a high or medium amount of control over the plan and its monitoring.

Twelve of the districts are attempting to desegregate all their schools. The remaining six, five under court order and one under HEW administrative action, have a more limited desegregation scope . Racial composition goals have been specified in all but one site for district schools in general. In most cases, the composition is clearly specified; for example, a district's plan may call for no school to have a minority population in excess of the district average, plus or minus 15 percentage points. All but four of the districts began to implement their current desegregation plans in 1975 or later. (We believe that these districts have more recent plans than most districts in the U.S.).

Magnet schools are the primary desegregation tool (referred to below as "magnet only") in eight of the districts. The remaining ten districts use magnet schools in conjunction with other techniques (referred to as "magnet component"). Magnet schools play three major roles in the desegregation of school districts. Most of the districts (10) are using them to desegregate certain schools, grade levels or geographic/ attendance areas. Four use magnet schools as the major tool for desegregating the entire district, and four see magnet schools simply as an additional tool for assisting in desegregation, useful because they provide voluntary options.

2.2 Magnet School Program Characteristics

The 18 districts have a total of 158 elementary magnets, 28 middle or junior high school magnets, and 41 senior high school magnets. Differences exist in the location of magnet schools by grade level. Secondary schools in our study tend to be located either in minority areas or in neutral areas (non-residential areas, such as central business districts). Elementary schools are located primarily in minority areas, followed by location in majority areas.

Twenty-four of the 41 secondary schools have a citywide attendance draw and nine more serve a geographic area plus a citywide draw. Forty percent of the elementary schools (74 of 183) also have a citywide attendance area. Still another 40% serve the neighborhood first and then a wider geographic area.

Thus, it can be said that, generally, elementary schools tend to enroll pupils from areas near the school or from the city as a whole, while secondary schools tend to enroll students from wider geographic areas (e.g., several school zones or the city at large).

A variety of program types can be found in magnet schools. The most frequently introduced types of magnets at the elementary level (59) are "non-traditional" (e.g., open education and continuous progress programs). These programs are followed by 38 traditional programs such as fundamental, "back-to-basics," or teacher-directed. The most popular programs at the secondary or high school level are those that provide instuction in specific careers or vocations (16 out of 41). There are 14 secondary schools which have curricula which may be college prepartory (science, language, academic). These data support the contention that elementary schools are "methods" oriented while secondary schools tend to be oriented toward substantive areas.

2.3 Variables of Intrinsic Interest

During the site visits, information was collected which did not, or because of lack of sufficient cases, could not correlate statistically with our measures of magnet effectiveness. This section presents a discussion of those characteristics of magnet schools and their contexts that, common sense suggests, may help us to understand some of the impacts of magnet schools upon the community.

- Strategic Placement of Principals and Staff

It may not be possible to establish a magnet school in an area that would be attractive to the parents of both majority and minority children. Realizing this, many districts have employed the strategic placement of principals and teachers in the magnet schools in order to overcome possible negativism. For example, if a magnet school has been placed in a predominantly majority area, the school district may place a popular and respected minority principal at the head of the school in order to attract minority students and because they feel that minority students will feel more comfortable with that principal to welcome them to new surroundings.

- Reactions of Minority Communities

Minority community representatives stated that they feel that magnet schools do not, at present, go nearly far enough in satisfying the need for desegregation. In fact, several individuals were quite certain that the magnets are detracting from the quality of education in the non-magnet schools.

Even though the minority community may agree that the quality of education at a neighborhood magnet school is much higher now that the education provided a previous years, there is resentment because the quality was so low when the school was de facto segregated. And, often, the minority community is irate because not all of their children will be allowed to attend the schools since a particular racial compositon is desired.

- Parent Participation

Even though the site visits did not include extensive interviewing of parents, team members were impressed with evidence of parental involvement on many levels. It was not uncommon, for instance, for team members to note that

parental participation added much to the ambiance of the school. Parents could be seen tutoring children, cooking (in the classroom!), helping in the library, observing their child (required at regular intervals by some schools), teaching and performing a myriad of other tasks.

- Evidence of Volunteerism

A large number of people have fought against busing for their children while maintaining that they are not opposed to desegregation per se. Our site visits have found that some of these people, given the opportunity to have some control over their children's schooling, and knowing that what is at the "end of the bus ride" is likely to be the finest educational alternative publicly available to them, are willing, even eager, to put their children on a bus. In an interview, one person said that finally she felt her tax dollar was buying something worthwhile and that, if her child's name was not drawn in the magnet school lottery, she'd take the school district offices apart "brick by brick."

- Reactions of Non-Magnet Principals

It is understandable that the principals (and staff) of non-magnet schools would feel slighted when the magnet schools are touted as being "better" than other schools. After all, these principals maintain, they have been doing their best to provide good education for years; now, suddenly, their best is not good enough. Also, principals do not want their schools closed; new principalships do not abound. The loss of even a few students to magnets from a school with declining enrollment could put its existence in jeopardy. Principals know when this situation exists and are not likely to inform their students or students' parents about magnet alternatives.

- Skimming

It has been feared that magnet schools might hasten the deterioration of non-magnet schools by "skimming off" their best students and faculty. While it is to some extent true that parents who place the highest value on their children's education are more likley to take advantage of magent options, it is not always true that their children are the "cream of the crop" academically or socially. In fact, we found surprisingly often that magnet schools were attracting children who were not succeeding in regular schools. These children, may have behavior problems, be academically disadvantaged or unmotivated, or have other special needs. For some parents magnets are viewed as a "last hope" for their children.

3.0 SCHOOL DISTRICT DESEGREGATION AND MAGNET PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

In the previous section we described the magnet schools in our sample, as well as the district contexts within which the magnet schools operate. We have used the characteristics of the magnet schools and the districts in an attempt to understand magnet school effectiveness and the differences between districts in desegregation effectiveness. From our analyses, the following major conclusions have been reached:

- Effectiveness of district desegregation was related more to contextual and demographic features of the district than to magnet school factors.
- Magnet schools were effective in a more limited capacity (i.e., used to desegregate particular schools or a particular geographic area) than a wider coverage capacity (i.e., district-wide).
- Magnet schools were more effective when used as one component of a comprehensive desegregation plan than when used as the major technique to achieve district desegregation.
- Effective magnet school programs were found, but they were not necessarily related to district desegregation effectiveness; one reason for this phenomenon was that many magnet programs served a small proportion of the district's pupil population.

3.1 District Desegregation

Desegregation at the district level was measured through the Index of Dissimilarity (D).* This measure is rather strict because it takes as its definition of equity the exact proportion of minorities in a social unit as is the proportion in the population. Thus, D is a measure of the extent to which the distribution of minority students is equal across all schools in the district. For this study, the index is extremely useful in that it provides a measure of desegregation that is comparable across districts. The index (D) score ranges from 0 to 1.00, with 0 being perfect racial balance and 1.00 being perfect imbalance. The score represents the proportion of minorities who would have to be reassigned (if no whites were reassigned) in order to have the same proportion of minorities in each school as in the whole school district. Although D is a good measure of desegregation effort from the perspective of equity alone, it does not measure how much interracial contact there is in a district. That is to say, we cannot tell from D the degree to which minorities are in contact with whites.

Interracial contact can be determined with Coleman's Sbw,* which is a measure of the proportion white in the average minority child's school. This index of interracial contact reflects both the distribution of the races across schools and the degree to which minority children have contact with whites. It is a measure of both equity and interracial contact. (In this regard, Smw corresponds closely to the ESAA index which is used to measure minority pupil

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*Karl Taueber and Alma Taueber, Negroes in Cities (Chicago: Atheneum, 1972, p. 236.

**The notation is changed from S_{bw} to S_{mw} to reflect the fact that we are measuring interacial contact with all minority groups in the district not just blacks.

isolation.) The lowest score a school district can obtain on Smw is 0 (minority children have no contact with whites). The upper limit, however, is determined by the proportion white in the district.

We have chosen to make our final assessment of district desegregation using a combined index that incorporates both D and Smw. Our decision to use Smw/D is based upon the measurement characteristics and upon the conceptual relevance of each of the separate indices. This index (Smw/D) combines the important items of information such that we can assess the amount of change in interracial contact for a given change in the equitable distribution of minority students. In order to assess the effect that the introduction of magnet schools has upon school district desegregation, we measure the difference between a district's score on Smw/D in the year prior to the introduction of magnet schools and Smw/D for 1977. A district which has been successful in district desegregation since the implementation of magnet schools, in terms of increased equity and interracial contact, should show an increasingly greater score.

Table 3.1 shows district scores on the index of dissimilarity (D), the index of interracial contact (Smw), and the combined index. As can be seen from the first column, D scores range from .066 to .814,with a mean of .301. It will be recalled that a low score on D means a district is relatively desegregated; a high score, the opposite. Thus, a score of .814 means that 81.4% of the minorities in the school district would have to be reassigned from their present schools to "majority" schools in order to have the same proportion minority in each school as in the whole school district. Judging by mean D scores, magnet component districts are more desegregated than magnet only districts.

In the third column of Table 3.1 are the results for our combined index, Smw/D. It is the change over time in a district's score on this index that constitutes our index of desegregation effectiveness (Smw/D). Those scores appear in the fourth column. (Note that the pre-magnet year varies from district to district.) Again we see that magnet component districts achieve more desegregation than do magnet only districts.

It is reasonable to expect that, without other actions, the enrollment of pupils in magnet schools could lead to an increased segregation of minorities and majorities in the non-magnet schools. An examination of the data indicates that, in general, non-magnet schools in the districts studied are <u>not</u> increasing in segregation. While the length of the experience with magnets is limited in these 18 districts, the available evidence shows that in general magnet schools do not have the effect of increasing segregation in the non-magnet schools. It should be noted, however, that this lack of an effect may be due in part to the small proportion of students enrolled in magnet schools in most of the districts.

Table 3.1

District Scores on Three Indices of Desegregation

	D	Smw	Smw / D	Δ Smw / D	Year Magnet Was Introduced
Jefferson Co.*	.098	.729	7.44	7.24	1976
Racine	.100	.741	7.41	5.16	1975
Montclair*	.066	.551	8.35	3.25	1977
St. Paul*	.120	.780	6.50	3.16	1973
Des Moines*	.116	.791	6.82	2.88	1974
Portland	.188	.706	3.76	1.38	1974
Dayton*	.262	.419	1.60	1.31	1975
Stockton*	.246	.414	1.68	1.05	1977
Springfield*	.258	.509	1.97	.94	1976
Milwaukee	.448	.400	0.89	.55	1976
Buffalo	.468	.381	0.81	.41	1976
Boston*	.316	.349	1.10	.39	1975
Montgomery Co.*	.120	.769	6.41	.14	1976
Dallas	.692	.228	0.33	.07	1976
Houston	.814	.165	0.20	- .01	1975
San Diego	.518	.391	0.75	- .03	1968
Tulsa*	.464	.462	1.00	- .18	1973
Tacoma	.124	.746	6.02	-1.62	1968
$\bar{x}$	.301	.530	3.50		
$\bar{x}$ Magnet Component Districts	.207	.577	4.29		
$\bar{x}$ Magnet Only Districts	.419	.470	2.52		

* Magnet Component Plan

3.2 Correlates of District Desegregation

Using the statistical and other data collected on the 18 districts and their magnet schools, we measured the relative contribution to district desegregation made by the districts' magnet schools. Magnet school variables did not show a meaningful relationship to district desegregation. The variables that did correlate with desegregation effectiveness fell into two groups: those representing the conditions under which desegregation is occurring in a district (contextual variables) and those representing attitudinal conditions under which the desegregation plan is operating. In the first group are variables such as the type of district desegregation plan and comprehensiveness of the plan. In the second group are variables which attempt to capture the community environment in which desegregation is occurring, including items such as the support of various constituencies for desegregation.

3.2.1 Contextual Variables

The type of desegregation plan was the variable most highly correlated with the desegregation index; districts which desegregate voluntarily achieve more desegregation. This is further confirmed by a second correlation: when the percent of minority students is high, less desegregation is achieved. The intercorrelation between type of desegregation plan and percent minority in the district is also high but negative, indicating that voluntary plans are more prevalent in districts with a lower percent of minority students.

The comprehensiveness of the desegregation plan describes whether all of the district or some subset of the district has been specified to have a certain racial composition. More desegregation is achieved in districts where the total district is involved in the desegregation plan.

Finally, two variables associated with the magnet program effort--the role of magnet schools in the desegregation plan and the percent of minority students participating in the magnet school program--were found to be related to district desegregation. The role of magnet schools in relation to district desegregation effectiveness is negative, indicating that more desegregation is accomplished when magnet schools are used as one technique among others to implement the desegregation plan. The percent minority students participating in the magnet school program--referred to as the scope of the magnet plan--also has a negative correlation with the desegregation index. This finding suggests that when the percent of minority students participating in magnets is high, less desegregation (district-wide) is achieved.

The contextual variables that were found to be important (i.e., highly correlated with the desegregation index) were entered into a regression equation to determine their relative effects on desegregation effectiveness. The results indicated that one variable, type of desegregation plan, accounted for the most variance in the desegregation index. In other words, knowing that a district had a voluntary plan is, with few exceptions, an accurate predictor of improvement in desegregation since the introduction of magnet schools in the district.

3.2.2 Community Attitudes

The relationship of the attitudes of various constituencies toward desegregation is, at best, suggestive. The findings indicate that the attitudes of the majority community consistently appear to be more highly correlated with achieved desegregation than do those of the minority community. Information

gathered during the site visits suggests that attitudinal changes have occurred. For example, comments were made by spokespersons of various community organizations that magnet schools offered a chance to have peaceful integration. One such respondent commented, "I don't like busing, but now that I know what's at the end of the line, I won't mind sending my child on a bus." Throughout the various site visits the research teams repeatedly heard of anti-desegregation organizers being the first to send their children to magnet schools. And, as one school official stated, "Once you get the endorsement of the most vocal opponents to desegregation, other people in the community will also send their children to magnets." It still remains to be seen whether or not in the long run magnets will continue to have a positive effect on community attitudes.

3.3 Correlates of Magnet Program Effectiveness

In proceeding through our analysis, it became clear that the conceptual linkage of measuring district desegregation in terms of the magnet schools in the district was not sufficient. We, therefore, developed the concept of the magnet program, which is the combined effort of all of the magnet schools in the district to reach racial composition and enrollment objectives. The variables which seem most relevant to this analysis include the amount of desegregation achieved prior to the advent of magnets in the district; the type of desegregation (voluntary or involuntary); the scope of the magnet effort; and the support of the minority community for the magnet effort.

The more desegregation achieved, the higher the districts were scored on magnet program effectiveness. The interpretation of this finding is that magnets will have little difficulty in attracting students and meeting enrollment goals when a given amount of desegregation has already occurred. The data further indicate that when districts desegregate voluntarily, they can be expected to have higher magnet program effectiveness. Here again, this would suggest that districts which have a "calmer" situation for desegregation would have fewer problems in reaching racial composition and enrollment goals of magnet schools.

The scope of the magnet effort is positively related to magnet program effectiveness. This variable is defined as the percent of minority students participating in the magnet program in the district. When the percent of minority students served by magnets is high, the district score on magnet program effectiveness can also be expected to be high. The support of the minority community for the magnet effort is a fourth important variable. When the minority community support for magnet schools was high, districts achieved a racial balance of students and met enrollment goals in their magnet schools.

4.0 MAGNET SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND ITS CORRELATES

In this section we identify the correlates of magnet school effectiveness. In identifying these correlates of effectiveness, we have addressed three basic research questions: 1) Are magnet schools in the 18 districts effective? 2) What are the major correlates of effectiveness? 3) What is the relative importance of the major correlates?

4.1 Defining and Measuring Magnet School Effectiveness

In defining effectiveness, we have focused on the most basic dimension of magnet school success, i.e., the ability to attract students. However, it is necessary to take into account two distinct aspects of a school's ability to attract students. These are its ability to enroll the desired number of pupils and its ability to attain an appropriate racial mix for the students enrolled. These aspects of school success, while related, are not identical. Our field visits revealed that districts usually give priority to racial composition, sometimes at the expense of the number of students enrolled.

We utilize several variables or indices in assessing effectiveness. Our measure of a school's ability to meet enrollment goals, which we call subscription rate, is the ratio of observed to projected enrollment for the 1977-78 school year. We use the subscription rates to assess a school's ability to achieve racial composition goals. The difference between the two ratios, observed/projected minority enrollment and observed/projected majority enrollment, is our measure of the proportion of students from each group in the school. We have made subscription rate a trichotomous variable: 1) a school's ability to meet its enrollment goal (within 85% of the target), 2) the tendency to over-enroll (more than 115% of the target), and 3) the tendency to underenroll (less than 85% of the target). These indices are computed separately for each race.

4.2 General Magnet School Effectiveness

In general, it appears that the magnets in our 18 districts are able to meet their racial composition goals. Also, magnets are generally able to meet enrollment goals for both races. At the elementary/junior high level 69% of the schools attained at least 90% of their projected minority sub scriptions, while 75% attained this level of majority enrollment. Similar distributions are found at the secondary level. Here 66% of the magnets attained at least 90% of their projected minority and majority enrollment. While the general ability of magnets to meet enrollment goals is quite good, a certain portion of schools--particularly at the secondary level--do appear to have severe problems in meeting goals. At the lower grades, 11% and 15% of the schools attain 60% or less of their projected majority or minority enrollment, respectively. At the secondary level, such problems are apparent in almost twice the percentage of schools (22% and 29%, respectively).

4.3 Elements of Magnetic Appeal

One of the first questions that often arises about magnet schools concerns the elements of magnetic appeal. For both grade levels, the most frequently mentioned elements of appeal are: 1) The program, which ranks first for both levels; 2) The voluntary nature of magnet schools, which ranks third

for the lower grades and second for the upper; and 3) The opportunity the school provides as "another chance" for problem children, which ranks fourth for lower grades and third for upper grades.

It is not surprising that program ranks first as element of appeal. However, it was somewhat surprising that the other two factors ranked as high as they did and therefore warrant some discussion. In some three-fourths of our sampled schools, the voluntary nature of magnet school attendance was indicated as an important factor in the school's appeal. In other words, the opportunity to volunteer for the magnet per se was an important element of attractiveness. But it appears to be largely independent of program. It appears, instead, to reflect the strength of parental desires to have some control over where their children will attend school.

The "another chance" aspect of magnets refers to the opportunity the magnet school offers to children who are perceived by their parents as having behavioral or academic problems at their present school. This "another chance" was mentioned as an appeal factor for some 60% of our 61 sampled schools. The emergence of this "another chance" issue is especially interesting. It suggests that magnet schools may attract students at the lower end of the achievement/social adjustment distribution at least as much as they attract those at the top.

Both of these findings have interesting policy implications. First, the opportunity to volunteer for a magnet school may encourage parents to actively accept desegregation via magnets as a means of retaining some degree of control over which school their child attends. Second, the "another chance" aspect of magnet appeal suggests that implementors of magnet schools must be prepared to serve a wide range of abilities--both academic and social--in the magnet classrooms. At a minimum, districts should anticipate the potential for lower-end skimming and prepare to identify this phenomenon as it occurs.

Location was the fourth most frequently mentioned element of appeal for the secondary grades. While we expected location to be a factor in a school's ability to draw students (as the analysis of correlates indeed indicated), we did not anticipate that it would be cited as an important positive element of appeal. Yet it was mentioned as such with notable frequency at the secondary level. (It should also be noted that while it ranks last as an element of appeal at the elementary/junior high grades, it was nevertheless mentioned for 30% of the schools at this level.)

Finally, the general quality of the school plant ranked sixth as an element of appeal for both grade levels. This low ranking suggests that while an impressive physical plant may be a "plus," it is not enough to attract students.

4.4 Major Correlates of Magnet School Effectiveness

From our analysis of the relationship between our school variables and our effectiveness measures, three variables-- type of program, type of school location, and type of attendance structure--were found to be highly correlated with magnet school effectiveness.

4.4.1 Type of Program

The distribution of program type varies by grade level. At the elementary/junior high level, there are very few vocational programs. At the second-

ary level, there are no non-traditional programs and very few traditionals. Thus, in assessing the relationship of program types to effectiveness measures, we have conducted separate analyses by grade level.

At the elementary/junior high grades, it appears that the non-traditional program type is far more strongly related to effectiveness than either of the other two program types found at this level. In other words, non-traditional magnet schools are most likely to meet enrollment and racial composition goals. Considering the amount of attention recently given to the "back-to-basics" movement in education, this is rather surprising. While the traditional programs do appear to be attractive (perhaps slightly more so for minority students than for majorities), it is clear that they are not as attractive as the non-traditionals.

At the senior high level, we find only two program types, the academic and the vocational. Neither type emerges as more positively related to effectiveness. However, the academic programs do appear to be far more attractive to majority students than to minorities. In fact, these programs seem to have notable problems meeting minority enrollment goals, while at the same time actually overenrolling majorities.

4.4.2 Type of School Location

For the 158 magnets for which data are available, we have identified four main types of locations: 1) Majority neighborhood, which contains 25% of the schools; 2) Minority neighborhood, which contains 42%; 3) Mixed neighborhood, which contains 19%; and 4) Neutral neighborhood, which is quite often a nonresidential, business zone, and contains 14% of the schools. At the elementary/ junior high level, only a very small proportion of magnets (7%) are located in neutral areas. At the secondary level, only 9% are located in majority areas. Thus, analysis of relationships between type of location and effectiveness measures are conducted by grade level.

At the elementary/junior high level, none of the three common locations--minority neighborhood, majority neighborhood, mixed neighborhood--emerges as most likely to meet enrollment and racial composition goals. However, there do appear to be differences among the three in terms of their attractiveness to one race or the other. Most clearly, the minority location appears to be unattractive to majorities. Our data on the pull of the majority neighborhood for minorities are frankly contradictory. When we look at overall minority subscription rate, we find a positive relationship with majority location. However, when we break down the overall subscription rate into its components (i.e., ability to meet goals, tendency to underenroll, and tendency to overenroll), we get a different picture. Majority location then appears to be most likely to either underenroll or overenroll minorities. Thus, we are left somewhat at a loss concerning the attractiveness of majority neighborhoods for minorities. On the one hand, we might conclude that the data indicate that majority locations are indeed acceptable, perhaps even desirable, to minority students. On the other hand, the contradictory relationships with underenrollment and overenrollment indicate that some unknown, confounding factor is at work, e.g., an attractive program can stimulate enrollment.

Finally, our data indicate that the mixed neighborhood may be an acceptable compromise at the elementary/junior high level. While this location type does not appear likely to meet racial composition goals, it does appear to be acceptable to both races, at least in terms of overall subscription rates.

Turning to the secondary level, we see that mixed neighborhoods clearly appear to be most likely to meet enrollment goals for both races. Further, neutral neighborhoods clearly appear to have problems in attracting majorities. We must exercise some caution in interpreting these patterns. At the secondary level, we are dealing with only two program types--academic and vocational. What appears to be a majority aversion to neutral neighborhoods may in fact be majority disinterest in vocational programs. However, there is no reason to suspect that mixed neighborhood magnets are predominately one program or another.

4.4.3 Type of Attendance Structure

For the 224 schools for which data are available, we were able to develop five basic types of attendance structures. These are:

- The citywide draw, which enrolls students on a district-wide basis, is used by 44% of our schools.
- Limited geographic area draw, which enrolls only those students who reside in a clearly defined geographic area or attendance zone, is used by 8% of the schools.
- Local neighborhood plus citywide draw gives first priority to neighborhood children. The remaining seats are then opened to students throughout the district. This structure is used by 30% of the schools
- Local neighborhood plus limited geographic area,which gives preference to neighborhood children and then enrolls students who reside in a clearly defined area. This structure is used by 7% of our schools.
- Citywide plus limited geographic area draw, which gives priority to children in a limited area and then enrolls students on a citywide basis. This structure is used by 12% of our schools.

The distribution of these attendance structures differs by grade level. At the elementary/junior high grades, we find all five types, although the citywide and local neighborhood plus citywide are, by far, predominant. At the secondary level, we find three types--citywide (by far predominant), citywide plus limited geographic are and local neighborhood plus citywide.

In spite of its predominance, the citywide attendance structure emerges at both grade levels as least likely to meet enrollment and racial composition goals. At the elementary/junior high level, those structures that are grounded in the neighborhood (either neighborhood plus citywide or neighborhood plus limited geographic area) appear most likely to meet goals. At the secondary level, the citywide plus limited geographic area attendance structure emerges as the most promising alternative.

Our findings strongly suggest that the citywide attendance structure may not be the most effective in meeting enrollment and racial balance goals. Where possible, it may be best to ground the magnet in a more limited area that preserves at least some sense of the neighborhood school.

4.4.4 The Relative Importance of the Major Correlates

The results of our regression analyses show that the total amount of variance accounted for by the three major correlates is quite low for all of our effectiveness measures, particularly at the elementary level. As we examined the rankings of the correlates as predictors, it became apparent that there are major differences across grade levels in the general pattern of relative importance. At the elementary/junior high grades, attendance structure appears to be the most important correlate, followed closely by program. Location seems to be of much less importance than either of these. In contrast, at the secondary grades, location appears to be the most important correlate. Program is second in relative importance, followed closely by attendance structure.

These general conclusions can be refined considerably when we examine minority and majority enrollment separately. For minorities, the attraction of the neighborhood school is indeed powerful, but this attraction can be countered relatively easily by an appealing magnet program. For majorities, however, it appears that to the pull of the neighborhood school is added strong concern over the location of the magnet school (location appears to be even more important than attendance structure to majorities at the secondary level). Thus, to attract majorities, magnets must have an attractive enough program to counter both the majority concern about the magnet location and the pull of the majority neighborhood school.

5.0 ANALYSIS OF THE ESAA PROGRAM

This section examines the ESAA awards criteria and awards process in relation to this study's findings concerning magnet school effectiveness in order to suggest changes in the awards process. We also compare ESAA funded and non-ESAA funded programs in order to reveal any significant differences which may assist in understanding reasons for success or non-success or magnet schools in helping to achieve school desegregation.

5.1 The ESAA Magnet School Awards Criteria

The amendments to the Emergency School Aid Act of 1976 authorized the funding of magnet schools for those activities designed to carry out the purposes "relating, generally, to the elimination of minority group segregation, discrimination and isolation and the effects thereof."* Applications under the ESAA Magnet School Program are evaluated through both objective and educational criteria. The objective (statistical) criteria measure the net change in minority group isolation** in the district schools. The scoring procedure is designed to ensure that the most recent desegregation activity of a district is given more importance in the awards decision. A total of 90 points may be awarded through the statistical criteria. The educational criteria provide 70 points toward the composite score. The sum of the points assigned through the objective and educational criteria provide the basis for ranking the applications in order of funding priority. However, the regulations allow at least five grants to be made where a sufficient number of "meritorious applications" have been submitted.

5.2 Assessment of the Awards Procedures for Academic year 1977-1978

A total of 42 applications for magnet school funding were received; a total of 12 grants were awarded. Ten awards were made to the first ten highest ranking applications. The two other awards were made to those applications which ranked 19th and 25th. Table 5.1 presents the isolation, quality and composite scores for the funded applications. One application had no statistical information at all (District H); two had zero statistical points, and three had very few points. Of the 12 awards, six had extremely low statistical scores which indicates a low degree of improvement in the isolation of minority children in the districts. The quality of the proposal, therefore, was the justification for the award. One award was made to a district in which there had been, according to the ESAA criteria, no minority isolation (District J). Two awards were made to districts in which less than 10 percent of the minority children were in isolated schools (Districts F and L). In one of these sites the award was made to assist in planning for a magnet school program which was projected to serve one percent of the minority children who were in isolated schools. Awards were made to districts which, through their own submitted statistics, were increasing isolation in the project year rather than decreasing isolation.

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*Federal Register, Vol. 42, No. 127, Friday, July 1, 1977.

**Isolation is measured in terms of the proportion of minority pupils in schools of over 50% minority enrollment.

Table 5.1

Isolation,* Quality and Composite Scores

for Funded ESAA Programs

District	Isolation Base Year I	Isolation Base Year II	Isolation Project Year	Score I	Score II	Total Statistical Score	Quality Score	Composite Score
A	53.5	62.6	80.2	9	12	21	65	86
B	72.9	81.3	96.0	8	10	18	68	86
C	33.7	54.6	66.0	11	10	21	$55\frac{5}{6}$	$76\frac{5}{6}$
D	92.8	84.2	97.5	2	10	12	$60\frac{2}{3}$	$72\frac{2}{3}$
E	39.0	45.2	58.9	6	10	16	$53\frac{1}{3}$	$69\frac{1}{3}$
F	96.3	99.6	99.0	1	0	1	$67\frac{2}{3}$	$68\frac{2}{3}$
G	66.2	75.7	65.1	0	0	0	67	67
H							$66\frac{1}{3}$	$66\frac{1}{3}$
I	29.6	78.0	76.9	15	0	15	$50\frac{2}{3}$	$65\frac{2}{3}$
J	100.0	100.0	100.0	0	0	0	62	62
K	15.9	15.5	15.6	0	2	2	57	59
L	93.3	93.2	98.1	2	4	6	$51\frac{2}{3}$	$57\frac{2}{3}$

*The ESAA Isolation score approximately reflects the proportion of pupils who are not in minority isolated schools. Thus, the higher the score the greater the proportion of children attending non-minority isolated schools.

There were a number of circumstances (e.g. late funding of the program, plus more funding than was originally planned) which made the awards process difficult. In addition, it was the first year of implementation for the program. However, this analysis illuminates some of the problems which exist in the implementation of the awards process. In particular, the educational criteria take on added importance in light of the significance they have in the actual award of funds. As noted earlier, the scores in educational quality allowed districts with little desegregation movement to place high in the prioritized ranking of districts. For instance, there were districts which had higher points on the statistical scores (showing greater desegregation achievement) and were not funded because their proposal score was not as great. There are no evident guidelines through which the objectives of the proposed program and their correspondence with federal program objectives can be assessed; there is no evidence of the basis upon which reviewers make their decision. In reading the applications, we found that the purposes for the magnet school programs are varied, ranging from a need to provide a "voluntary experience in desegregation" to a need to desegregate certain schools or certain grade levels. In many there is no expression of the desire to impact on district-wide desegregation. Further, our review of the funded proposals did not reveal evidence that the proposals clearly expressed the ESAA related objectives for the magnet program.

5.3 Magnet Schools and Other Desegregation Efforts

The awarding of statistical points in the awards process is based upon the calculation of the changes in the numbers of minority students in isolated schools. In the application of the statistical criteria there is no distinction made between the desegregation which results from magnet schools, and that which results from other desegregation techniques. There is no distinction made of changes caused by exogenous factors, such as change in migratory patterns. Therefore, when the effectiveness of magnets is assessed in terms of district level desegregation, there is no real way to separate out the impact of magnets from the impact of other factors. Or to put it another way, what happens at the district level (either negatively or positively) may be attributed to magnet schools without a valid reason.

Comprehensiveness is operationally defined under the current awards process by size of change in desegregation results. While size of change and comprehensiveness of plan may be related, they are not equatable. Therefore, the application of the statistical criteria does not unambiguously address the question of the "comprehensiveness" of a district desegregation program. In turn, the assessment of the effectiveness of magnet school through changes in district-wide desegregation does not unambiguously assess the contribution of magnet schools to desegregation since there are so many other activities which are also affecting desegregation, both positively and negatively.

5.4 Magnet Effectiveness and ESAA Awards Criteria

It is evident from our previous analysis that magnet programs supported in (1) districts which have had a history of positive desegregation activity, and (2) districts in which desegregation (at least structurally) would be easiest, would have the greatest chance of success. However, this would not meet the purpose of ESAA nor of the federal government's intention to aid in desegregation efforts in the more difficult districts. There is little in our

data that would be of assistance in specifying the regulations or awards criteria which would enchance success in these more difficult districts. However, in such districts magnet schools could be a part of a series of desegregation techniques in a mandatory desegregation plan.

The factors affecting magnet school success may enhance effectiveness in any district. These factors provide a basis for activities which the awards procedures should emphasize. First, the awards criteria should require specification of the location of the school and the steps that the district will take to ensure the succes of drawing the racial groups to the school. Second, the attendance area served by each school should be specified; citywide zones should be discouraged, particularly on the elementary school level, unless explicitly justified and a plan of action set forth to ensure the appropriate draw of the racial groups. This last requirement would be most apropriate for larger districts. These two suggestions also stress the importance of establishing the specific objectives for the magnet program instead of allowing the general rubric of "district-wide" desegregation to approximate the purpose. Such specification would assist in more complete planning by the district and enable the ESAA program to more completely understand and assess the district's application.

5.5 Differences Between ESAA Funded and Non-ESAA Funded Programs

We now examine the characteristics of magnet schools funded by ESAA compared to magnet schools not funded through ESAA. We examine these differences by grade level since our previous analysis has indicated that there are divergent factors affecting elementary and secondary schools. Before proceeding to these separate analyses, we present, in Table 5.2, the distribution of minority enrollment patterns for ESAA and non-ESAA funded districts.*

It is interesting to note that there is some difficulty experienced by the ESAA funded schools in reaching their racial composition goals. The non-ESAA sites have distributions of enrollment which show a greater dispersion around the 20-50 percent guidelines. A meaningful proportion of the magnet schools are either impacted with minority students (60 to 100 percent) or relative havens for majority students (0 to 20 percent). Although we have found great enthusiasm for magnet schools in the districts we visited, these figures describe the difficulty some schools have had in attracting the desired proportions of majority and minority students.

ESAA funded elementary schools are more effective in reaching their minority and majority students enrollment goals and are more balanced racially in terms of their goals than are non-ESAA magnet schools. In assessing this finding, however, it should be kept in mind that often the ESAA schools have much greater leeway in reaching their goals than do other districts; for example, the requirement for 20-50% minority students compared to the district average plus or minus 10%. However, the ESAA schools do exhibit a better ability to enroll the proportions of minorities and majorities for which they had planned.

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*The reader is specifically cautioned that these enrollment figures were obtained from the districts generally before the midpoint of the 1977-78 academic year, and before the 60-day limit imposed by the ESAA for reaching their racial composition goals. It is expected, therefore, that many of these schools (particularly ESAA schools) had changed their compositions since these data were collected.

Table 5.2

ESAA - Non-ESAA Minority Enrollment

Percent Minority	Total Schools	ESAA No. of Schools	ESAA Percent	Non-ESAA No. of Schools	Non-ESAA Percent
0-10	1	-	-	1	.67
11-20	16	4	1.3	12	8.11
21-30	17	6	7.6	11	7.43
31-40	29	13	16.5	16	10.81
41-50	38	18	22.8	20	13.51
51-60	41	16	20.3	25	16.89
61-70	27	8	10.1	19	12.84
71-80	20	7	8.9	13	8.78
81-90	13	2	2.5	11	7.43
91-100	14	5	6.3	9	6.08
Missing	11	-	-	11	7.43
Total	227	79		148	

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The funding level for the ESAA Magnet School Program should be maintained at its current level, or increased only gradually

Magnet schools are no panacea for segregation. This study has shown that there is a limited amount of desegregation that can be attributed directly to magnet schools. Many of the districts funded through ESAA have only marginal desegregation needs, thus failing to represent the priorities established by the legislation. However, the study has also shown that magnet schools are successful in achieving their desired racial composition and that they are associated with increased desegregation in many school districts. We believe that, at this time, not enough is known about their effectiveness in school district desegregation nor about their possible consequences for the districts, the communities they serve or particularly about the effects upon the children. It is too soon to depend on them as a national scale desegregation strategy.

USOE should clarify the objectives for the ESAA Magnet School Program

For the ESAA Magnet School Program to become more effective as an aid to desegregation in local school districts, the program objectives must become more precise. There are at least four different and divergent objectives stated for the Magnet School Program in the legislation and regulations which provide a justification for the support of a wide variety of magnet school programs. These objectives should be clarified to stress the funding of districts which are 1) in the process of new desegregation; 2) which have a comprehensive desegregation plan (i.e., a plan that covers all grade levels); and 3) which are able to show how their proposed magnet plan will assist in district-wide desegregation.

Magnet component programs rather than magnet only programs should be given priority for ESAA funding.

This study has shown that magnet component programs are more successful than magnet only programs in assisting in desegregation. Magnet component programs meet the intent of the legislation. Further, the success and utility of magnet schools as the major or only desegregation technique, with the exception of very small programs, have not yet been attempted in a scale large enough to provide us with an understanding of the conditions under which such a program would work. At this time, therefore, support of magnet only programs should be very much on an experimental basis.

The ESAA Program Office should review its policy of assessing magnet school programs on the basis of district-wide desegregation.

A magnet program should "fit into" the overall design for district desegregation. However, to measure the success of the magnet program in terms of the district desegregation effort does not take account of other desegregation activities, or exogenous factors, which can lead in turn to allow one to unfairly criticize the magnet program for the lack of desegregation movement or, conversely, erroneously give credit to a magnet program when desegregation is really the result of other techniques. We suggest that each proposed magnet program be assessed prior to award in terms of the objectives for which it

was designed by the district. The magnet program could be assessed by separate criteria (e.g., was it designed to provide desegregation of a particular neighborhood or area of the city), and the signficance of the magnet program to the overall desegregation effort. Such an approach would be helpful not only in the awards process, but would clarify as well the criteria to be used in future evaluations.

> USOE should review the Magnet School Program and its awards criteria in relation to school districts with a high proportion of minority students.

The current awards procedures discriminate against the large districts and against those with high minority populations. Although this recommendation conflicts with the findings of this study which show that magnet schools are more successful in the lower proprotion minority districts, we feel that the ESAA Magnet Program should not be inhibited from providing assistance to that group of people and to those school districts most in need. The federal Program Office should consider remedies to this situation, such as: using the "up to 5 grants" set-aside contained in the regulations for such districts; relaxation of 20-50 per unit minority student compositon requirements to allow a higher proportion of minority students to attend ESAA supported schools; and develop a new awards mechanism and criteria for these districts, perhaps based on the impact magnets will have upon specified areas of the district.

THE ESAA AWARDS CRITERIA

> Statistical criteria should be used to establish a more effective way to meet program objectives through:
>
> a. Establishing a "threshold" of eligibility for funding; and
>
> b. Requiring that progress in desegregation in the project year be demonstrated by the district in order to be awarded ESAA magnet funds.

The interpretation of regulations by the ESAA Program Office stresses that magnet funds should go to newly desegregating school districts. Our analysis showed that this criterion was not always incorporated into the awards process. This recommendation is designed to ensure that the intent of the regulations shall be followed. By using the statistical points as a "threshold" device (e.g., all applicants must show some recent desegregation), the districts showing no desegregation will be eliminated. Districts should be able to show, also, that there is desegregation taking place in the project year. If such progress cannot be demonstrated, then the district is neither newly desegregating nor are magnets providing the assistance in meeting the major objective of the program, desegregation.

> Educational criteria should be simplied, and more stress should be placed upon desegregation related activities.

Although the awards process is designed so that the statistical criteria accounts for 56 percent of the composite score, the points awarded through the educational criteria are in practice the major element (73-100%) providing the basis for the granting of awards. The education criteria are too fragmented and contain criteria which are unnecessary to the magnet program. There are only two factors in the educational criteria related to desegregation

activities. Their influence in the awards process should be increased by awarding more points to these activities. In addition, teacher training or plans for assisting teachers and parents in the interracial and intercultural relations should be included.

An additional point award criterion measuring location of the magnet school(s) and techniques to be used to ensure student enrollment should be added to the Educational Criteria.

This study indicates that location is related to the success of the magnet school in reaching its enrollment and racial composition goals. This factor will impact differently on majority and minority students and families. It is not wise nor possible to require that magnet schools be located in racially mixed neighborhoods so that the area is not a threat to majority or minority students. However, the importance of this factor is such that applicants should be aware of the implications of where the school is located. The applicant should provide plans for attracting students to the school (e.g., strategic placement of popular principals or teachers).

USOE should review the Magnet School Program and the Regulations with regard to their impact upon the minority community.

As seen by many members of the minority community, the ESAA Magnet School Program is unfair to minorities. They reason that magnet schools are designed primarily to attract whites to stay in the school system and, thus, magnet schools become havens for whites. The restrictions on the proportion of minorities able to attend magnet schools represents an approach which is prejudicial against minorities and which favors majorities. Indeed, the view that majority students will not attend a school of excellence with a minority population of more than 50 percent is seen as support of an "ideology" which continues to denigrate minorities. We suggest that this problem is of sufficient importance to the image of the ESAA Magnet School Program to merit serious concern and corrective action. A possible corrective action would include allowing higher proportion minority enrollments (e.g., 55-60 percent) in selected schools within a school district.

The ESAA Magnet School Program should more specifically emphasize its role as a desegregation program, and not primarily its educational innovations.

There is an underlying tension between magnet schools as educational innovations or as desegregation techniques, which is found through the regulations and in the school districts we visited. In the educational award criteria, educational factors far outweigh the concerns (expressed by the points awarded) given for desegregation activities. There is little in the educational criteria which would guide the school district or the federal program to establish or monitor desegregation activities. It is clear tht the motivating force for most of the programs is educational improvement, not desegregation, particularly for teachers and parents. To the extent that the ESAA program does not clarify the priority of desegregation, funds will be provided more for general educational activities than for desegregated schooling.